WORDSWORTH'S FRENCH DAUGHTER

GEORGE McLEAN HARPER

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THE STORY OF HER BIRTH, WITH THE CERTIFICATES OF HER BAPTISM AND MARRIAGE

BY

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WORDSWORTH'S FRENCH DAUGHTER

When, in the winter of 1914-15, I found among the manuscripts in the British Museum a collection of letters from Dorothy Wordsworth, the poet's sister, in which she referred again and again to his daughter Caroline, born of a French mother, the discovery did not surprise me. I had long been convinced, more by omissions than by positive traces in his poems and letters, that his nature had received, while he was in France, a blow from which he never wholly recovered and whose causes had not been made known to the world. These unpublished letters of Dorothy were addressed to her intimate friend, the wife of the famous abolitionist Thomas Clarkson. Mrs. Clarkson had gone to Paris, in the brief interval between the entry of the Allies in 1814 and

the return of Napoleon from Elba, in 1815.

Under date of October 14, 1814, Dorothy writes to her: "I cannot help very much regretting that you forgot to tell me where to address you while you were there, as I should have been exceedingly glad that you had seen the young woman whom I mentioned to you, the more so as a treaty of marriage is now on foot between her and the Brother of the officer Beaudouin whom I mentioned to you as having been at Rydale, and she and her Mother are extremely anxious that I should be present at the wedding, and for that purpose pressed me very much to go in October. This, unless such good fortune had attended us as being taken under your and your Husband's protection, we could not think of at this season, and therefore I wish that the marriage should be deferred till next spring or summer, because I desire exceedingly to see the poor Girl before she takes another protector than her mother, under whom I

believe she has been bred up in perfect purity and innocence, and to whom she is life and light and perpetual pleasure; though from the over-generous dispositions of the mother they have had to struggle through many difficulties. Well, I began to say that I particularly wished that you could have seen them at this time, as through you I should have been able to enter into some explanations, which, imperfectly as I express myself in French, are difficult, and as you would have been able to confirm or contradict the reports which we receive from Caroline's Mother and Mr. Beaudouin of her interesting and amiable qualities. They both say that she resembles her Father most strikingly, and her letters give a picture of a feeling and ingenuous mind."

Sara Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, was to accompany Dorothy. They dreaded the inconvenience and dangers of travel, these two middle-aged ladies, in a foreign country against which England had been at war for nearly twenty years,

and wished they could go under the protection of Henry Crabb Robinson, the more so as they intended to carry presents of English manufacture. From a letter begun on the last day of 1814, we learn that the wedding was postponed till April and that they were hesitating about going so late in the spring because they expected to stay nine or ten weeks and would thus be in Paris in June, when King Louis XVIII was to be anointed. They feared the public disturbances and possible outbreak of civil war which might attend that event. "Besides," adds Dorothy, "the journey will be very expensive, which we can ill afford, and the money would be better spent in augmenting my Niece's wedding portion. To this effect I have written to her. She would not consent to marry without my presence, which was the reason that April was fixed."

Suddenly this little family project was wiped from the scroll on which Destiny inscribed the Hundred Days and Waterloo. On March 16, 1815, Dorothy wrote

to Mrs. Clarkson: "For the sake of our Friends I am truly distressed. The lady whom I mentioned to you from the first was a zealous Royalist, has often risked her life in defence of adherents to that cause, and she despised and detested Buonaparte." Dorothy is referring here to Caroline's mother, and continues, "Poor creature! in the last letter which we had from her she spoke only of hope and comfort; said that the king's government was daily gaining strength." On April 11, 1815, she quotes to Mrs. Clarkson from a letter by Caroline's mother describing the march of Napoleon's army into Paris, and adds: "Poor creatures, they say they are shipwrecked when just entering into port."

From a letter dated August 15, 1815, eight weeks after Waterloo, we learn that it was proposed to send Caroline to England to meet Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, and incidentally that "Madame Vallon," her mother, had many acquaintances, to one of whom it was possible she might en-

trust her daughter for the journey. Dorothy writes on April 4, 1816, still expressing her ardent desire to go to France, even though Caroline's wedding, of which Madame Vallon had sent her a detailed description, had already taken place.[1]

In the summer and autumn of 1820, Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, Dorothy, Henry Crabb Robinson, Thomas Monkhouse (a cousin of Mrs. Wordsworth's), Mrs. Monkhouse, and her sister Miss Horrocks travelled on the Continent. In October the party were in Paris, where they spent nearly the entire month near Madame Baudouin, i.e., Caroline, and her husband and mother. There were frequent visits back and forth between the French family, living in the rue Charlot, near the Boulevard du Temple, and the English travellers, who had taken lodgings in the same street. Dorothy wrote to Mrs. Clarkson on October 14, saying:

[1] These letters to Mrs. Clarkson are given in full or in copious extracts in my Life of William Wordsworth, London and New York, 1916.

"We have had great satisfaction at Paris in seeing our Friends whom I have mentioned to you."

Crabb Robinson's Diary fills numerous closely-written little volumes, now preserved in Dr. Williams's Library, in London. Only about one-eighth of their contents has been printed, and I was courteously allowed to examine the manuscript originals at my leisure in 1915. Among the unpublished parts of it I found several references to "Monsieur and Madame Beaudoin" and "Madame Vallon," and abundant proof that they and their English visitors were on terms of intimacy.

I have often been asked why, having published the letters to Mrs. Clarkson and the extracts from Robinson's Diary, I did not go farther, in my "Life of Wordsworth," and make more use of such illuminating information. It is true that the facts, of which a brief summary is given above, threw light upon many of Wordsworth's poems, but I preferred to let it shine without interposing any medium of

my own, and the delicacy of the subject forbade unnecessary speculation. However, having discovered, in July, 1917, the official records of Caroline's birth and marriage and obtained here and there some additional items about her mother's family, all of which would no doubt be disclosed sooner or later, I have thought it best to give them as simply and correctly as possible, with just the requisite amount of comment. Every fresh fact makes it more and more apparent that whatever, from a legal point of view, may have been the nature of the connection between Wordsworth and Marie-Anne or "Annette" Vallon, it was openly acknowledged and its consequences were honorably endured.

Certain biographical and historical facts must be borne in mind in order to understand the series of extraordinary situations in which these young persons were placed. Wordsworth, with a college friend, tramped across France in the summer of 1790, when he was twenty years

old and the Revolution was in the full bloom of radiant promise. His impressions of the country, its inhabitants, and the Revolution were entirely favorable. In November of the following year, having obtained his degree at Cambridge, and being in an unsettled state of mind and unwilling to engage at once in the studies of a profession, he returned to France and, after stopping five days in Paris, spent the winter at Orleans, and went to Blois, forty miles farther down the Loire, in the spring of 1792. We have only two letters to fix the chronology of his stay at Orleans. He wrote to his brother Richard from that town on December 19, about a fortnight after his arrival there, and to his friend Mathews from Blois, on May 17, some weeks after his change of residence. It was at Orleans that he became acquainted with Marie-Anne Vallon. The letter to his brother, as well as the account given in the "Prelude," Book IX, lines 125-188, depicts the society in which he moved at Orleans as extremely Royalist,

aristocratic in its pretentions, and scornful of the common people. We shall see presently that the Vallon family held Royalist views and were made to suffer for them. If Wordsworth, early in the spring of 1792, was driven away from Marie-Anne by her relatives and yet desired to remain near her, the place most convenient for him would have been Blois. Had he wished to avoid her, he would have been likely to hide himself in Paris or to go to some distant part of France.

At the time of his second arrival in France, the Revolution was still proceeding favorably. Considering what an evil incubus had been thrown off, there had been little flagrant injustice and very little bloodshed, and many fair-minded, moderate men were devoted to the cause. The generous young Englishman threw himself whole-heartedly into the Revolutionary current, reading "the master pamphlets of the day," sitting as a disciple at the feet of Michel Beaupuy, a Republican officer at Blois, and attending the

meetings of a radical club. He was a homeless orphan, and, under the trusteeship of his uncles, enjoyed the income of a small patrimony, so that the world lay very free around him. If he remained hovering about Orleans, it was, we may assume, because he really loved Annette and refused to abandon her.

One of the effects of the Revolution was that the State assumed some of the functions that previously were exercised by the Church. A distressing consequence was confusion in regard to the laws of marriage. Before the Revolution marriage was in the hands of the Church and was treated as a sacrament. By a decree of the National Assembly on July 12, 1790, known as the civil constitution of the clergy, all priests and prelates were declared functionaries of the State. Only a few bishops and not quite half of the lower clergy took the oath of office under this law, the rest choosing to remain faithful to Rome. It can readily be seen that each side would be reluctant to recognize

the validity of marriages celebrated by the other. The ancient sanctity of Church marriages was further assailed in an article of the Constitution of September, 1791: "The law considers marriage as only a civil contract." In former times the registry of births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths, or what the French call the *état civil,* had been kept by the clergy. After the civil constitution of the clergy the parish registers were placed in charge of the "constitutional" or Revolutionary priesthood, and yet in many parishes, especially in rural parts, the non-juring priests endeavored to retain their old prerogatives. A proposal was made in the Assembly, in February, 1791, to have the parish registers kept by the civil authorities.[2] By the law of September 20, 1792, the Legislative Assembly completely secularized the keeping of the *état civil.* "Everywhere the directories and municipalities claimed a right to oblige the con-

[2] L. Sciout: Histoire de la Constitution civile du Clergé, Vol. III, p. 118.

stitutional priests to keep no records of the sacramental acts, to give up publishing banns, and to treat marriage in church as a mere formality."[3] Some bishops agreed to favor this line of conduct; others objected. Some of them forbade the priests in their dioceses to pronounce the nuptial blessing over persons who refused to have their marriage proclaimed in church.[4] If the law bore thus heavily upon the constitutional clergy, it was even more oppressive and confusing in the case of non-jurors. Marie-Anne Vallon belonged to a family which would have considered a merely civil marriage null and void and marriage by a constitutional priest an insult to religion.

We are now in a position to inquire more particularly who Marie-Anne Vallon was, and what was the relation between her and William Wordsworth. Some light has been shed upon the first of

[3] *Ibid.*, III, 355.

[4] Proclamation of the provisional executive council, January 22, 1793.

these questions through a few indirect and accidental references in a book published by Mr. Guy Trouillard, keeper of the Archives of the Department of Loir et Cher: "Mémoires de Madame Vallon, souvenirs de la Révolution dans le département de Loir et Cher." Paris, 1913. The writer of these memoirs, whose maiden name was Marie-Catherine Puzela, was the wife of Paul-Léonard Vallon, Annette's brother. She finished them in 1823, and M. Trouillard prepared them for the press at the instance of her grandson M. Omer Vallon, maître des requêtes honoraire au Conseil d'Etat and administrateur délégué du Chemin de Fer du Nord. A descendant of Paul-Léonard Vallon, Madame Maurice Lecoq-Vallon, informs me that, according to a domestic tradition, the correct name of the family was Leonnar, belonging to Scottish ancestors who came into France with James the Second, and that the name Vallon or du Vallon was substituted for it later. The memoirs narrate, for the benefit of

the author's descendants, the adventures and sufferings of herself, her father, and her husband from 1791 to the end of the Terror. She was born in 1776. Her husband, the son of Jean-Baptiste-Léonard Vallon, a surgeon, and Françoise Yvon, was baptized at Blois in 1763. Paul-Léonard Vallon and Marie-Catherine Puzela were married in 1804, he having been, most of the time since March, 1793, in prison, in exile, or under police surveillance, for complicity in a Royalist uprising at Orleans, where he lived at the outbreak of the Revolution. This was the attempted assassination of Léonard Bourdon, one of the travelling representatives of the Convention. It was bloodily avenged by Fouquier-Tinville and his fellow-delegates, and is frequently referred to in Aulard's "Recueil des actes du Comité de salut public avec la correspondance officielle des représentants en mission," Paris, 1889-1911. Not until 1804 was Vallon authorized to resume the practice of his profession as a notary. As

soon as he obtained permission from the police to do so, he settled at Saint-Dyé, a village on the left bank of the Loire, nine miles above Blois, where he was a notary and justice of the peace till 1830 and died in 1835.

It was his devotion to the cause of Royalty and the Roman Catholic Church that gave him favor in the eyes of Mademoiselle Puzela's father. They were fellow-sufferers. Puzela had himself languished in prison, at Blois and Orleans, between August, 1793, and January, 1794, being saved from the guillotine by the heroic fidelity of his daughter, who insisted on sharing his fate. He then began life again as a notary at Saint-Dyé, where he lived till his death in 1806. During an illness which resulted from her sacrifices, and especially from overwork while helping him in his business, she consulted, to her father's horror, the famous Dr. Chambon de Montaux, who had been mayor of Paris from December, 1792, to February, 1793, and in that capacity had led Louis

XVI to the bar of the Convention for his trial and accompanied the President of the Executive Council when he went to announce to the King his sentence of death.

Writing to her children, and referring to Paul-Léonard Vallon, the author says: "During my convalescence, which was very slow, your father was released from the prison of Sainte-Pélagie, where he had been kept since his return from foreign parts. A small inheritance called him to Saint-Dyé. His relatives lived at Blois, and one of his sisters came with him to Saint-Dyé. My father was quite famous [for his Royalist views, as the context shows]. The sister held opinions which were reputed excellent [i.e., she was strongly Royalist and Catholic], and though she was not acquainted with us, she introduced her brother. The victims of the Revolution told one another their misfortunes and soon became intimate friends. Your father told mine in confidence that he was under the surveillance

of the secret police and could reside nowhere without a special permit. To attempt disobedience would be to defy the tyrants. His sister had heard the supposed cause of my illness, and as her brother had been employed fifteen years as a notary's clerk at Orleans and had plenty of ability, she proposed a match between us. Still stunned by Dr. Chambon's report of my health, and circumvented by the sister, who did not give him time to breathe and kept urging this alliance with a Royalist as a marriage worthy of me, my father, though he had sworn to himself never to let me marry, at last gave in." She was so ill that she had to recline in a big easy chair to receive the formal visit of her *fiancé* and his sister, but the marriage took place three weeks later, on the 10th *pluviôse,* January 31, 1804.

The point of interest for us in the foregoing account is that Paul-Léonard Vallon and Marie-Anne, if she was the sister mentioned, were intensely Royalist and

Catholic. Another point made clear in the "Mémoires" is that throughout the year 1792 a fierce contest was waged in the country around Blois between the followers of Rome, who seem to have been numerous in the villages, and the supporters of the constitutional clergy. For example, in one village, Saint-Cyr, the Republicans drove away the priests who would not take the oath and locked up the church; whereupon a society of non-conforming Catholics was organized, which worshipped in a barn. In July a band of armed "patriots," inspired, it was supposed, by the Revolutionary club, the Friends of the Constitution, at Blois, interrupted a vesper service in the barn; and in the following month several non-juring priests were driven out of the Department. It is practically certain that Wordsworth, and quite certain that his friend the officer Beaupuy, attended the meetings of the Friends of the Constitution, which were held nightly in the church of the Jacobins at Blois. The

author of the "Mémoires," though only sixteen years old, tried to shield her father from the charge of being an aristocrat by attending one of the sessions. "Women," she says, "were admitted just like men. It was there, we were told, that youth was formed in the love of our country; so my age was no obstacle." Borrowing the plain democratic garb of an artisan's daughter, she ventured, as she expresses it, into that cave where people played with the lives of virtuous citizens. "What a sight! With what horror was I seized when I perceived that it was a church! All my opinions, all my principles, made me see the thunderbolt launched by God's avenging arm. . . . The platform where men stood to speak was a pulpit from which I had often heard the gentle morality of our holy religion. . . . They crowded round that platform, trying to see who could speak first and be the first to bring accusations, and loud applause was the reward of whoever offered the greatest number of victims." To her hor-

ror she saw her father's brother rise to this bad eminence and receive this crown of praise. "Let me out!" she cried to the woman who accompanied her, and returning to her father she told him that the denunciations seemed to be principally directed against the priests, but that he too should at once leave Blois.

Under the direction of the constitutional bishop Grégoire, who was a prominent member of the Convention, the Revolutionary church was very successfully organized at Blois and had many adherents. But we learn that non-juring priests held many secret services in the city and that these services were still more frequent in the outlying villages. Gazier in his "Etudes sur l'histoire religieuse de la Revolution française," Book II, Chapters 4 and 5 (as quoted by M. Trouillard) says: "Mass was celebrated at almost every door. . . . The *good priests* rebaptized and remarried as fast as they could."

All this tends to prove that if William Wordsworth, a Protestant and, moreover,

a zealous Revolutionary, desired to marry Marie-Anne Vallon, a Roman Catholic and Royalist, in the year 1792, at Orleans or Blois, he would have had to overcome very great obstacles. It is evident that the Vallon family would not have regarded as valid a marriage performed by a constitutional priest, even had they overcome their objections to the young man himself. And if, yielding his principles to theirs, he had employed the services of a non-juring priest, the marriage would have been, strictly speaking, illegal at that time and until the publication of the Concordat, April 18, 1802. Whether there was a marriage of this latter kind might have been regarded as an open question, were it not for the two documents which we shall consider presently.

As we learn from a letter to his brother Richard, the young poet was still at Blois on the tenth of September, but expecting to be in London "during the course of the month of October."[5] His departure from

[5] Harper: Life of Wordsworth, I, 173.

Blois was probably delayed by the dreadful events in the first week of September, when the massacres of imprisoned Royalists occurred and the Revolution was clearly proved to have got beyond the control of moderate men. He passed through Orleans later in the autumn, on his way to Paris, with what thoughts we can only surmise. Of his ominous fears in Paris he has left a description in the tenth Book of the Prelude. He appears to have returned to England in December, 1792, or even so late as January, 1793. On the first of February France declared war against England, and from that time until after the Treaty of Amiens, March 28, 1802, he could not have re-entered France unless in disguise and at the extreme risk of his life. I have given some slight bits of evidence, in my "Life of Wordsworth," Vol. I, 209 and Vol. II, 417, for a view that he was in France in 1793, but without attaching much importance to them. On the evidence of Thomas Carlyle, Wordsworth once let

fall the remark that he had witnessed the execution of Gorsas, which was in October of that year. If so, he was brave to the point of foolhardiness, almost incredibly clever, and very lucky to escape from France after such an adventure.

The next, and by far the clearest ray of light is shed on this obscure story by a document of which I obtained a copy in July, 1917, through the kindness of M. Jacques Soyer, Keeper of the Archives of the Department of Loiret. It has never before been published:

[*Archives communales d'Orléans, registre des baptêmes de la paroisse de Sainte-Croix. G.G. 185.*]

Le quinzième jour de décembre de l'an mil sept cent quatre vingt douze, le premier de la République, par moi, soussigné, a été batissé une fille, née ce jour sur cette paroisse de Williams Wordwodsth, anglais, et de Marie-Anne Vallon, ses père et mère; nommée Anne-Caroline par Paul Vallon et Marie-Victorie-Adelaïde Peigné, femme André-Augustin Dufour.

Williams Wordsodsth, absent, a été représenté en qualité de père de l'enfant par le citoien susdit André-Augustin Dufour, greffier du tribunal du district d'Orléans, en vertu d'un pouvoir ad hoc à nous présenté et signé "Williams Wordworsth"; de laquelle signature les citoiens André-Augustin Dufour, Paul Vallon et Marie-Victorie-Adelaïde Peigné, susdits, nous ont certifié l'authenticité par leurs signatures, ci-dessous et sous leur responsabilité.

M. V. A. Peigné. Vallon. Dufour
Perrin, Vicaire épiscopal.

Translation:

[Communal Archives of Orleans, registry of baptisms in the parish of Sainte-Croix. G.G. 185.]

On the fifteenth day of December, of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, the first of the Republic, by me, the undersigned, was baptized a girl, born the same day in this parish to Williams Wordwodsth, an Englishman, and Marie-Anne Vallon, her father and moth-

er; named Anne-Caroline by Paul Vallon and Marie-Victorie-Adelaide Peigné, wife of André-Augustin Dufour. Williams Wordsodsth, being absent, was represented as the child's father by the aforesaid citizen André-Augustin Dufour, recorder of the court of the district of Orleans, by virtue of a power of attorney *ad hoc* presented to us and signed "Williams Wordworsth," of which signature the citizens André-Augustin Dufour, Paul Vallon and Marie-Victorie-Adelaide Peigné aforesaid have certified to us the authenticity by their signatures below and on their own responsibility.

M. V. A. Peigné. Vallon. Dufour.
Perrin, Episcopal Vicar.

In the letters of Dorothy Wordsworth and in her Journal there are several remarks between 1795 and 1802 which indicate that her brother was in correspondence with Annette and that Caroline, when she was old enough, wrote to her father. These letters also show that Dorothy's friend, Mrs. Marshall, was in the

secret, if secret it was. Writing to her from Racedown on November 30, 1795, Dorothy says: "William has had a letter from France since we came here. Annette mentions having despatched half a dozen, none of which he has received." As soon as it became evident that peace between England and France was at hand, in the spring of 1802, the agitation of William and Dorothy grew very painful, and they determined to cross the Channel. The meeting at Calais with Annette and Caroline followed,[6] and two months later Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson were married. Annette was never married, and was known as Madame Vallon. It is strange that no mention of her or of Caroline is made in any of the published letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, though the story of their lives was known to Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Clarkson, Crabb Robinson, Miss Horrocks, Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse, Helen Maria Williams, and the Hutchinson family. It is beyond question

[6] Harper: Life of Wordsworth, II, 31.

that Caroline's birth was illegitimate, but that the subsequent conduct of Wordsworth towards her mother was honorable and open I have no doubt whatever. What remains to be discovered is the reason why this connection was not resumed and regularized after the meeting in 1802. Further communication was rendered extremely difficult or even impossible for eleven years by the war, which began again in May, 1803, and did not end till after the first abdication of Napoleon, in April, 1814, whereupon, as we have seen, William and Dorothy at once got in touch with "Madame Vallon" and her daughter.

It is a touching fact that Caroline was married, not as Caroline Vallon, but as Caroline Wordsworth, and with her father's formal consent. In July, 1917, I copied from the Archives of the Prefecture of the Seine, regt. 27, No. 57, the following document, regarding that event. It has never been published:

Baudouin

L'an mil huit cent seize le vingt Février à midi par devant nous Alexandre Cesar Crétté, Ecuyer, chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, maire du troisième arrondissement de Paris, faisant fonction d'officier de l'état civil—sont comparus Jean Baptiste Martin Baudouin, né à Saulx le Duc, département de la Côte d'Or le vingt quatre septembre mil sept cent quatre vingt, chef de bureau au mont de piété, demeurant à Paris, rue de la Texeranderie No. 82, neuvième arrondissement, fils majeur de feu Eme Georges Baudouin, et de Marie Anne Etienne sa veuve, demeurant à Montbard, consentante par acte passé devant Guérard et son collègue, notaires Royaux au dit Montbard, le seize du courant, enregistré et légalisé, d'une part:—et Anne Caroline Wordsworth, née à Orléans, département du Loiret, le quinze décembre mil sept cent quatre vingt douze, demeurant à Paris, rue de Paradis No. 35, quartier du Faubourg Poissonnière, fille majeure de Williams

Wordsworth, propriétaire, demeurant à Grasmer, Kendan, Duché de Westermorland, en Angleterre, consentant par acte en date du dix sept octobre dernier, enregistré et déposé à Me Cleophile Michel Deherain, notaire à Paris, et de Marie Anne Vallon, présente et consentante, d'autre part:

Lesquels nous ont requis de procéder à la célébration de leur mariage, dont les publications ont été faites au troisième et au neuvième arrondissements de Paris, les dimanches vingt huit janvier dernier et quatre du courant, à midi, et affichés pendant l'intervalle prescrit par la loi, sans qu'il nous ait été signifié aucune opposition au dit mariage, faisant droit à leur réquisition, après avoir préalablement donné lecture des dites publications, des actes de naissance des comparants, de celui de décès du père du réquerant, du consentement de sa mère, et celui du père de la réquerante, énonçante que la vraie manière d'écrire le nom de la dite réquerante est Wordsworth et non pas Word-

wodsth, comme dans son acte de naissance; enfin du chapitre six du titre du Code civil intitulé du marriage, avons demandé au futur époux et à la future épouse s'ils veulent se prendre pour mari et pour femme, chacun d'eux ayant répondu séparément et affirmativement, nous avons déclaré, au nom de la loi, que Jean Baptiste Martin Baudouin et Anne Caroline Wordsworth sont unis par le mariage: De quoi nous avons dressé acte en présence des sieurs Michel Eustase Baudouin, de St. Etienne, âgé de vingt-cing ans, instructeur en chef de la compagnie Ecossaise, chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, demeurant à Paris, rue de la Texeranderie No. 82, frère de l'époux, Nicolas Bailly, chevalier officier de la légion d'honneur, conseilleur à la cour de cassation, agé de soixante six ans, demeurant rue Ste. Hyacinthe No. 6, Armand Parfait huet, âgé de quarante deux ans, dem't rue des fossés Montmartre No. 17, amis des Epoux, lesquels, aussi que la mère de l'épouse et les témoins ont

signé avec nous, après lecture faite. Signé au Registre A. C. Wordsworth, J. B. M. Baudouin, M. A. Vallon, Baudouin de Ste. Etienne, Le chev^er^ Bailly—huet, Boullay et Crétté.

Translation:

At noon on February 20, 1816, there appeared before me, Alexandre César Crétté, esquire, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, mayor of the third arrondissement of Paris, acting in my capacity as an officer of the bureau of vital statistics, Jean Baptiste Martin Baudouin, born at Saulx le Duc, in the Department of the Côte d'Or, September 24, 1790, head of a bureau in the government loan establishment, residing in Paris, No. 82 rue de la Texeranderie, 9th arrondissement, eldest son of the late Georges Baudouin and of Marie Anne Etienne his widow, who lives at Montbard and gives her consent in an affidavit signed before Guérard and his colleague, royal notaries at the aforesaid town of Montbard, duly registered and legalized, on the one part:—and Anne

Caroline Wordsworth, born at Orleans, in the Department of Loiret. December 15, 1792, residing in Paris, No. 35 rue de Paradis, in the quarter of the Faubourg Poissonnière, major daughter of Williams Wordsworth, land-owner, residing at Grasmer (Grasmere), Kendan (Kendal), in the county of Westermorland (Westmorland), England, who gives his consent in an affidavit dated the 17th of last October, and duly registered and deposited with Maître Cléophile Michel Deherain, notary in Paris, and of Marie Anne Vallon, here present and giving her consent, on the second part:

Which parties of the first and second parts having requested me to proceed to the celebration of their marriage, of which the banns were read in the third and ninth arrondissements of Paris, on Sunday, the 28th of last January and Sunday the 4th of the present month, at noon, and posted for the time prescribed by the law, without any objection to the aforesaid marriage having been made, I have granted their

request, after having first read aloud the aforesaid banns, the birth-records of the contracting parties, the record of the bridegroom's father's death, his mother's affidavit and that of the bride's father, she stating that the true way to spell her name is Wordsworth and not Wordwodsth, as it stands in her birth-record; and finally, having read aloud chapter six of the Civil Code, entitled Marriage, I have asked the future bride and groom if they would take each other for husband and wife, and each having responded separately and affirmatively, I have declared, in the name of the law, that Jean Baptiste Martin Baudouin and Anne Caroline Wordsworth are united in marriage: whereof I have drawn up a statement in the presence of Michel Eustase Baudouin, of St. Etienne, aged twenty-five, chief instructor of the Scottish company, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, residing in Paris at No. 82 rue de la Texeranderie, brother of the husband, Nicolas Bailly, chevalier and officer of the Legion of

Honor, counsellor at the Supreme Court, aged sixty-six, residing at No. 6 rue St. Hyacinth, Armand Parfait huet, aged forty-two, residing at No. 17 rue des Fossés Montmartre, who all, together with the bride's mother and the witnesses, have signed with me, after I read the statement.

Signed the register: A. C. Wordsworth, J. B. M. Baudouin, M. A. Vallon, Baudouin of St. Etienne, the chevalier Bailly,—huet, Boullay and Crétté.

From the foregoing pages it must be inferred that Wordsworth, being a just, merciful, and brave man, admitted his fault freely and endeavored to shield with his name the innocent child of his wrongdoing. Not only once, but twice, and the second time at the risk of losing a reputation for peculiar correctness of conduct, did he publicly acknowledge Caroline as his daughter. And for the space of at least twenty-eight years, as we have seen, he kept in friendly communication with Annette. What seems almost unbeliev-

able, and can indeed only be explained on the ground that Mrs. Wordsworth was a woman of extraordinary magnanimity and that he inspired in her a complete sense of his own goodness, is the fact that she, with a company of relatives and friends, should have been willing to visit Annette. I have made no attempt to deny that the origin of all this trouble was a wrong; but the unusual difficulties that stood in the way of a legal marriage between William Wordsworth and Anne-Marie Vallon should be and will be remembered.

It gives me great pleasure to know that my friend, Professor Emile Legouis, of the Sorbonne, is about to publish a revised edition of his delightful book, "The Early Life of Wordsworth," in which he will, I hope, furnish some further information about Annette and Caroline. He appreciates the value of these biographical details for the light they throw upon Wordsworth's psychology and upon the course of his political and literary development;

and, with his rare insight into the poet's character and his exquisite grace of style, he will doubtless give more coherence and significance to the story than I have done.

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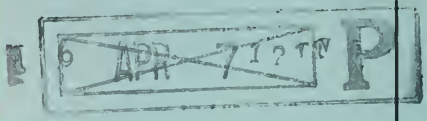

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